

FAITH AND UNITY



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for the
Defence of Church Principles

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Threepence

POINTERS

S.P.G. and South India. Writing about the significance of the decision of the Standing Committee of S.P.G. about South India, the Bishop of the Windward Islands rightly calls his article, beginning on page 123, *A Momentous Decision*. The Bishop has asked us to make it quite clear that the article represents his own views only, and in no way commits the Society. We greatly regret to have to report that efforts are being made to nullify the Society's decision. Provided those efforts fail, as we hope to be able to say next month that they have failed, we hope that, in spite of the hard times through which we are passing, our readers may be able to express their approval of the Society's action, not only by the special gift which the Bishop suggests, but also, if possible, by some increase in their regular support of the Society's work.

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A Fresh Approach to the question of union between the Church and the Methodists in the United States of America is commented on by an English correspondent in an article on page 126. The question our correspondent asks in his final paragraph seems to us to be pertinent in all discussions about union, and to require some clearer answer than such vague phrases as "the best that other traditions have to offer" or "the spiritual blessings they are able to bestow." Is there any other answer than that proposed by our correspondent?

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Cambridge Sermon suggesting a new approach to the subject of reunion with the Nonconformist bodies is the subject of editorial comment in Crockford's *Clerical Directory* for 1947. They are wise words and we quote them as such on page 127. Insistence on the careful definition of words and phrases is, no doubt, tedious to those who are in a hurry and an annoyance to those who are seeking a formula on which all can agree. But if unity and not worse confusion is to be gained, it is essential that all should mean the same thing by the words they use and not be using the same words to mean different things. One would think that was fairly obvious, but it seems often to be overlooked.

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Our Travelling Secretary, the Rev. H. Howard, has the following engagements in the second half of July—during August he will be on holiday.

- July 13. Sheffield : Preach, St. Matthew's.
„ 15. Sheffield : Meeting.
„ 17. Sheffield : Meeting.
„ 18. Doncaster : Meeting.
„ 20. Bolton-on-Dearne : Sermons.
„ 21. Bolton-on-Dearne : Meeting.
„ 25. London : Preach, St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington.
„ 27. Oxford : Preach, St. Barnabas.

Fr. Howard has sent us the following report of his recent activities :

Since our last issue of *Faith and Unity* I have been speaking and preaching in the far north of England. Everywhere I have met with great enthusiasm and interest, as well as occasional exciting opposition. Even the best of instructed Church people seem to know little of the various reunion schemes and are not at all alive to the dangers. On hearing the full story—especially of South India—their indignation rises and they always want to know what they can do about it. We nearly always get a resolution through without difficulty and it is then sent to the Bishop of the Diocese and the Archbishop of the Province. Many become subscribers to *Faith and Unity*—never having heard of it before. It is curious to find that the opposition invariably comes from that form of churchmanship which values our Catholicity least of all. That reveals the value of Sunday sermons on the Faith. I am confident that, useful and necessary as the meetings are, the Sunday preaching and teaching does the best work, and is the most profitable in the long run. My Sundays are now booked up until Christmas.

I am now ready to begin bookings for 1948. Will priests and secretaries please write to me at once at 14 Magdalen Road, Oxford.

A MOMENTOUS DECISION

There can be no doubt that during this past decade or so, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has steadily declined in the estimation of Catholic Churchmen generally. Even when the Right Reverend the General Secretary has been a man of very definite Church principles confidence has scarcely been restored. There are two main causes for this :—

(a) There has always been a problem still not resolved altogether, that monies earmarked for specific dioceses were used, rightly or wrongly, merely to relieve the Society's General Fund of some of its liability in the matter of grants to those particular fields. This, of course, accounts for the growth and support of the many diocesan missionary societies. Incidentally there is a hope that the work of S.P.G. and the associations may be co-ordinated when the Lambeth Fathers meet in 1948.

(b) The other cause has to do with the very natural fear that the Society helps dioceses overseas in which Church principles, as we know them, are not in sufficient evidence. The South Indian Scheme itself illustrates this contention. For many years S.P.G. House has poured out annually substantial sums in support of the work of bishops, priests, deacons and lay workers who sit so loosely (though no doubt conscientiously) to Church principles that they are not averse to participating in what appears to many to be a new schism. Many argue that their support should be expended upon such missions as uphold the Faith in its entirety, rather than upon those whose principles are of doubtful veracity. Whilst it is true that the Society prides itself upon being "the Handmaid of the Church," yet there is every reason why Catholic Churchmen should expect a Society, which represents itself to be the servant of the whole Church, to proclaim the whole "Counsel of God" to the whole world.

MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

To-day, those who think upon these lines are in happier case than they were. For some time the authorities of the Society have been faced with the formidable prospect of having to make up their minds upon this vital point, and the South Indian Scheme has driven them to a decision. So it comes about that S.P.G. Standing Committee met in the Hoare Memorial Hall at the Church House to consider the report of an *ad hoc* committee. None present but had the cause of the reunion of Christendom at heart and none but were actuated by a sincere desire that the Indian converts were not left to languish for want of European help if this could be avoided. The Dean of Westminster took up the cudgels on behalf of the signatories of the Majority Report which, in effect, contended for the continued maintenance of the

South Indian work. The method supported was the appointment of an S.P.G. Emissary to the Indian dioceses concerned, with full power to make grants to former Anglican workers who were still continuing to maintain Anglican principles. The case was put with singular persuasiveness, but many of the Dean's hearers were puzzled to know how Anglican principles could be upheld by those who had forsaken the Anglican Communion for a body with a defective doctrine of the Church and of Episcopacy. The Rev. Michael Bruce carried the day for the supporters of the Minority Report in defiance of those who held that it was no business of the S.P.G. to determine doctrine or allow doctrinal considerations to weigh in their distribution of the Church's monies. He forcefully put forward the point that the issue was a doctrinal one, and that the Society must declare whether it stood for the traditional view of the Church and her Ministry or otherwise. There can be no question that Fr. Bruce's scholarly and most charitable speech made a profound impression, and at least one distinguished Churchman, who came to the Hall with an open mind, voted with Fr. Bruce.

None can forecast, even had such a thing been possible, what would have happened if S.P.G. had tried to discover the opinions of its supporters at home and overseas. To have attempted to find out the attitude of the several thousands of its Incorporated Members would have been an unwieldy proceeding. The Standing Committee, with its membership of some 400, was an uncertain quantity, heavily weighted as it was with ex-officio members. About seventy only represented the parishes of the country, whilst some 250 were Bishops. Of those present a dozen or more did not vote for one reason or another.

THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION.

Protagonists of the South Indian Scheme, some of whom may not be numbered amongst the Society's most enthusiastic supporters, were there in some force. To the surprise of many, sixty-eight voted for the ultimate discontinuance of S.P.G. support to the South Indian dioceses and thirty-four to the contrary. It is left open to S.P.G. to reconsider the matter if and when the South Indian Christians elect to follow the paths of orthodoxy. Very full reports of the gathering have appeared elsewhere so that the purpose of this brief article is merely to indicate the implications of the decision.

For a long time, Catholics of our Communion, clergy and laity alike, have been discussing the prospects of the future in the event of the acceptance in the Provinces of Canterbury and York of a reunion scheme approximating to that of South India. To be very frank, there are those who are determined to remain within the fold of Anglicanism, so long as valid ministrations are assured ;

others talk openly of forsaking the Mother Church for the Roman obedience, and yet others, some in responsible positions, would explore the possibilities of a non-juring movement. This all points to the profound and widespread anxiety of many Churchpeople to-day. Over against all this, the rebuff to those who have worked for the Scheme of reunion between the American Episcopal Church and some of the Presbyterian sects, as well as the changing attitude towards the Canadian Scheme for a similar union with the United Church have allayed some of this anxiety. Now they have been further heartened by the finding of the Standing Committee of S.P.G.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION.

The value of the finding lies in two directions. Those who are prepared to surrender no principle which has traditional and historical authority, now know that the first stand has been made and from this beginning opposition will gain momentum. Those who have not been behind in exerting pressure in the opposite direction now know that they are likely to be confronted with such stern opposition that they may well halt lest the Church is thrust down the path of disruption.

So far as the venerable Society is concerned, she stands to lose either way. Had its Committee chosen to support the South Indian Scheme she must have lost considerable support—some estimate as much as 75 per cent. As it is there is every possibility that one or more new societies of South Indian sympathizers will come into the field and to some extent militate against S.P.G. interests. But there can be no shadow of doubt that thousands of missionary-minded Churchpeople will have had their minds set at rest and can now support S.P.G. and all its works with a clear conscience. Because of the above situation the Society's needs are likely to be greater than ever. In our view no better thing could happen than that Churchmen from one end of England to the other should express their approbation of the Committee's attitude by sending a gift to S.P.G. House at 15 Tufton St., London, S.W. 1, in thankfulness for what may prove to be one of the most momentous decisions ever made in the annals of the Church.

✠ VINCENT WINDWARD ISLANDS.

Reunion by Anticipation. This new Pamphlet No. 12, by the Rev. B. P. Burnett, is also now on sale, price 1/1 post free. Written by one who returned from work in South India only last year, it makes quite clear why Catholics have felt bound to oppose the Scheme of Union there.

REUNION WITH THE METHODISTS

Under this heading the editorial columns of *The Living Church* of March 30th, 1947, print the following suggestions for an approach towards the question of union between the Church and the Methodists in the United States of America.

"Under the title 'Union in Twelve Years,' " they write "the Rev. C. Stanley Lowell, pastor of the Wesley Methodist Church in Dover, Del., makes a constructive approach to the question of union between the Methodist and Episcopal Churches. . . .

"Dr. Lowell makes two exceptionally important points. The first is that, unlike the Presbyterians, the Methodists were members of the Anglican household of faith as recently as 1780. Thus they have the same background and traditions, and the healing of the schism would be a matter of reunion. The gap to be closed is not nearly as great as between the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches.

"Dr. Lowell's second point is that, while the problem of orders is not the most serious obstacle to union, it is the first obstacle, which must be cleared away before anything else can be attempted. To clear away this obstacle, he says, demands humility and penitence on both sides. Episcopalians should redress the grievance caused by the refusal of the Bishop of London in 1780 to ordain Methodist preachers, as requested by John Wesley. They should offer these orders now, not in a spirit of condescension, but as a long overdue recognition of equality and brotherhood.

"Can the leaders of our two Churches have the courage and statesmanship to chart a reunion on the *addition* to each communion of the values of the other, rather than the *subtraction* of values to find a minimum platform which arouses the enthusiasm of neither side? If so, there is genuine hope for reunion. . . ."

WESLEY'S EARLY IDEALS

The first thought that this sincere but indefinite appeal calls up is that much might be done if Methodists could return to the ideals and practices of the young John Wesley and his companions of the Oxford days, when prayer and sacrament and Christian virtue were sought for himself and for others within the fold of the Church.

Wesley's early ideals were those of a great Catholic Churchman. Is it impossible that his descendants should recapture those ideals and discard the later accretions which caused the break? If, as Dr. Lowell suggests, the time (less than two centuries) that the schism has lasted is historically short, ought it not to be possible to retrace the path to the point of the young Wesley's evangelical but orthodox piety? It would be perhaps a difficult return to his

early doctrinal position, from which there has been so great a departure, as well as of outward observance: but if there could be a movement, "Back to the Wesley of Oxford," the way would indeed be open.

THE PROBLEM OF ORDERS

When the suggestion is made that Episcopalians (a trying term to Catholics, as if it were their only distinguishing characteristic) should offer the Orders refused in 1780, does Dr. Lowell mean that the majority of Methodist ministers could in sincerity receive Anglican Orders according to our Ordinal and accept the full teaching of the Book of Common Prayer?

Courage and statesmanship, says *The Living Church*, are needed to plan a reunion based on the addition to each communion of the values of the other. But here we come up against the oft-repeated and awkward question—What is it that our Methodist brethren in Christ wish to give the Anglican Communion? Evangelical zeal at home and abroad, a desire for growth in personal holiness, a recognition of the part that the laity must play in the life of the Church and in the conversion of the world—these things are not, thank God, absent from the Anglican Communion. Individual bishops, priests and lay people may often, and do, fail dismally to play their appointed part in the furtherance of the Kingdom; and perhaps such failure is not unknown elsewhere. But the Catholic Church herself has nothing to receive from those outside her, except their greatly longed-for return to her fold.

A CORRESPONDENT.

WISE WORDS

"On 3 November the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had recently returned from a visit to Canada and the United States, preached a sermon before the University of Cambridge. His Grace took John 10. 9 and 10 as his text, and the sermon dealt with the possibility of union between the Church of England and the Non-conformist Communions. It represented what may be regarded as a new approach to the subject, inasmuch as it envisaged "full Communion" prior to constitutional union, though it is to be hoped that this would follow in due course. Necessarily such a suggestion demands full and careful consideration. A definite opinion about it can hardly be pronounced until it has been developed at much greater length than is possible within the limits of a sermon. *Prima facie*, however, it appears to us to amount to an attempt to overcome barriers by treating them as if they were

non-existent ; or at least not formidable. This policy may sometimes prove successful. But experience suggests that it is more likely to end in disaster.

" His Grace emphasized the measure of unity which exists already between the Church and the non-episcopal Communion. It is real, and a matter for thankfulness. But the crux, as everyone knows, is the Ministry. If the non-episcopal Communion were willing to " take episcopacy into their systems " much would depend upon what *they* understood by the act. There is a wide difference between regarding episcopacy as a convenient adjunct to a system which has worked, upon the whole satisfactorily, for some centuries, and could, therefore, presumably continue to do so indefinitely, and regarding it as the very core of the Christian system, as it ought to be.

" The following analogy occurs to us. Two men might ' accept ' the Bible and ' take it into their lives '. That is to say they might both read it diligently and be conscious of having benefited greatly by doing so. But if one put it on a level with the Greek and Latin classics (which he might believe to be the best foundation of anything which deserves to be called education) while the other regarded it as the Word of God, they would not be in agreement. Up to a point they might have a great deal in common. But religiously the difference between them would be fundamental, and would be bound to reassert itself from time to time ; possibly in very startling fashion." Preface to Crockford's *Clerical Directory* for 1947, p. xvi.

The Apostolicity of the Church. This C.D.C.P. Pamphlet No. 4, by Fr. A. G. Hebert, S.S.M., which has been out of print for some time, is once more available and can be had either from the Secretary, C.D.C.P., or from the Pax House for 7d. post free. The Pamphlet answers two questions : " What do we mean by confessing our belief in the Church as Apostolic ? " and " How can it be claimed that episcopacy is of divine appointment ? " These are questions relevant to all schemes for reunion.

Communications for the Editor and subscriptions to *Faith and Unity* (three shillings a year minimum) should be sent to the Secretary, C.D.C.P., 6 Perth Road, Beckenham, Kent. Back numbers of *Faith and Unity* are available and can be had from the Secretary, price fourpence each, post free.